

WE of  $\beta$ -hydroxypropionaldehyde per gram of food item to said food item, said method reducing the number of bacteria more than does treatment with 250 mM glycerol or glyceraldehyde.

#### New Claims

Please replace claim 60 (which replaced previous claim 56) with new claim 67 as follows:

67. A method for reducing the number of bacteria in a food item for animals so that the number of bacteria in the food item is reduced at least  $10^2$ -fold in the treated food item by about 4 days after treatment as compared with an untreated control food item after 4 days, comprising:

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- (a) adding a precursor substance to said food item, said precursor substance selected from the group consisting of glycerol and glyceraldehyde at a concentration of 20-500 mM;
  - (b) selecting a Lactobacillus reuteri strain which produces  $\beta$ -hydroxypropionaldehyde under anaerobic conditions and in the presence of glycerol or glyceraldehyde;
  - (c) applying to the surface of the food item a solution containing about  $10^9$  cells per gram of food item of said Lactobacillus reuteri strain; and
  - (d) placing the food item under storage conditions wherein said cells are under anaerobic conditions and said strain of Lactobacillus reuteri produces  $\beta$ -hydroxypropionaldehyde as a detectable end-product,

said strain being defined as Lactobacillus reuteri by standard genetic analysis techniques.

WLS Please replace claim 61 (which replaced previous claim 57) with new claim 68 as follows:

42 68. A method of treating non-Lactobacillus reuteri bacteria so that the number of said non-Lactobacillus reuteri bacteria present after treatment is less, by a multi-log factor, than the number of bacteria in an untreated control, comprising:

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- (a) adding a precursor substance, said precursor substance selected from the group consisting of glycerol and glyceraldehyde at a concentration of 20-500 mM;
  - (b) selecting a Lactobacillus reuteri strain which produces  $\beta$ -hydroxypropionaldehyde as a detectable end-product under anaerobic conditions and in the presence of glycerol or glyceraldehyde;
  - (c) adding cells of said Lactobacillus reuteri strain, the number of added cells of Lactobacillus reuteri being about 10-fold less than the number of said non-Lactobacillus reuteri bacteria present prior to said treatment; and
  - (d) providing anaerobic conditions for said cells of Lactobacillus reuteri.
- Rule 126

HE Please replace claim 64 (which replaced previous claim 59) by new claim 69 as follows:

69. A method for providing a probiotic to the gastrointestinal tract of an animal, comprising selecting a Lactobacillus reuteri strain which produces  $\beta$ -hydroxypropionaldehyde as a detectable end-product under anaerobic conditions and in the presence of glycerol or glyceraldehyde; and feeding the animal cells of said strain of Lactobacillus reuteri in an amount sufficient to colonize the gastrointestinal tract of said animal.

44 [NE Please replace claim 65 with new claim 70 as follows:]  
70. A method according to claim 69, wherein a substance selected from the group consisting of glycerol and glyceraldehyde in a concentration of at least 20 mM is co-present in the gastrointestinal tract of the animal with the Lactobacillus reuteri cells.

Correspondence of Claims Herein to Claims in Parent Applications

Current App. SN 08/214,014 SN 07/708,800

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56	60	67
57	61	68
59	64	69
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REMARKS

Reconsideration of the patent application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments to the claims (or